

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

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1. (Previously Presented) A method for communicating information over a BLSR SONET line switched ring having a plurality of communication terminals connected over a first and a second transmission line, the method comprising the steps of:

at each terminal, inserting an outgoing signal onto said first transmission line along a first direction of transmission defined from said terminal towards the first adjacent terminal, inserting said outgoing signal onto said second transmission line along a second direction of transmission defined from said terminal towards a second adjacent terminal;

at each said terminal, receiving an incoming signal over said first transmission line from said first adjacent terminal, along said first direction of transmission, and from said second adjacent terminal along said second direction of transmission; and

operating said plurality of communication terminals according to a unidirectional protection protocol upon detection of a failure condition in said incoming signal,

wherein said incoming signal comprises an incoming non-ATM STS-W and an incoming ATM STS-Mc multiplexed in an incoming STS-N, and said outgoing signal comprises an outgoing non-ATM STS-W and an outgoing ATM STS-Mc, multiplexed in

an outgoing STS-N, where  $M+W=N$ , and N, M, and W are integers indicative of the rates of said respective signals.

2. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said incoming signal is an incoming asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) STS-Mc and said outgoing signal is an outgoing ATM STS-Mc.

3. (Canceled).

4. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim ~~[[3]]~~ 1, wherein each of said incoming and outgoing STM STS-W comprises a plurality of virtual tributaries (VT).

5. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said incoming signal comprises only said STS-Mc and said outgoing signal comprises only said outgoing ATM STS-Mc; and wherein said unidirectional protection protocol operates according to a variant of a BellCore GR-1230-CORE standard, comprising unmodified assignments for all bytes of the transport overhead (TOH) field of said incoming signal, except for

a modified assignment of bits 0-4 of the K1 byte, wherein a first span code is used for a lockout of protection code, a second span code FS-S is used for a signal fail on protection code, and third span codes, and reverse request codes ~~and RR-P~~ are eliminated; and

a modified assignment of bits 6-8 of the K2 byte, wherein the code "Bridges and Switched" is used for a code "Switch".

6. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said unidirectional protection protocol operates according to a Bellcore GR- 230-CORE standard for said incoming and outgoing non-ATM STS-W and according to a variant of a BellCore GR-1400-CORE standard for said incoming and outgoing ATM STS-Mc, said variant comprising unmodified assignments for all bytes of the transport overhead (TOH) filed of said incoming signal, except for

a modified assignment of bits 0-4 of the K1 byte, wherein a first span code is used for a lockout of protection code, a second span code FS-S is used for a signal fail on protection code, and third span codes (SF-S), (SD-S), and reverse request codes are eliminated; and

a modified assignment of bits 6-8 of the K2 byte, wherein the code "Bridges and Switched" is used for a code "Switched".

7.-22. (Canceled).

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